

P 261347Z MAR 90
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2938
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY RIYADH
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 03292

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/B AND DS/TAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PINR OFDP PREL LY SU

SUBJECT: LIBYAN PRESENCE IN SUDAN

REF: A) STATE 62856, B) KHARTOUM 2849, C) KHARTOUM 2428,
D) KHARTOUM 1749, E) KHARTOUM 2825, F) 89 KHARTOUM 10663

¶1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

¶2. AT THIS TIME, LIBYAN PRESENCE IN SUDAN IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE PRECISELY, BUT OVERT LIBYAN OPERATIONS APPEAR LIMITED. LIBYAN ARAB AIRLINES (LAA) FLIES TO KHARTOUM FROM TRIPOLI ONCE A WEEK AND MAINTAINS A SMALL KHARTOUM STAFF. THE LIBYAN ARAB FOREIGN INVESTMENT CO. (LAFICO) AND THE LIBYAN SUDANESE CO. (LASCO), BOTH HOLDING COMPANIES, ALSO MAINTAIN OFFICES IN KHARTOUM. LAFICO BEGAN OPERATIONS ABOUT 1981 AND LASCO ABOUT 1985; BOTH HAVE LITTLE OVERT ACTIVITY. IN ADDITION, THE LIBYAN-ARAB HOLDING CO., A FRONT ORGANIZATION WHOSE OVERT ACTIVITIES INVOLVE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS, HAS A KHARTOUM BRANCH. LIBYAN-SUDANESE ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS ARE DETAILED IN REF B. AS STATED IN REF D, LIBYA IS NOW SUDAN'S ONLY RELIABLE SOURCE OF PETROLEUM AND THE ONLY COUNTRY WILLING TO SELL TO THE GOS ON CREDIT, FOR WHICH LIBYA WILL INCREASINGLY DEMAND PAYMENT IN POLITICAL CURRENCY.

¶3. THE FRONT GROUP "ISLAMIC CALL" IS CONSIDERABLY MORE ACTIVE THAN THE LIBYAN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS, WITH OFFICES IN THE KHARTOUM DISTRICTS OF NEW EXTENSION AND RIYADH. ALTHOUGH NO DETAILS ON STAFF ARE AVAILABLE, BOTH OFFICES ENGAGE IN PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES AND RECEIVE NUMEROUS SUDANESE VISITORS.

¶4. THE LIBYAN EMBASSY (CALLED THE "LIBYAN ARAB BROTHERHOOD BUREAU") IN KHARTOUM HAS AN OFFICIAL STAFF OF 20 DIPLOMATS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE VERY UNSPECIFIC TITLES. THE AMBASSADOR (CALLED THE "SECRETARY GENERAL"), RAMADHAN ALI BASHIR, A DEAD RINGER FOR QADHAFI, ARRIVED JANUARY ¶29. NO BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS ON BROTHERHOOD BUREAU STAFF ARE AVAILABLE.

¶5. AMONG THE BROTHERHOOD BUREAU'S ACTIVITIES REPORTEDLY IS SUPERVISION OF LIBYAN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVES IN SUDAN (REF E). ALTHOUGH FEW DETAILS ABOUT THE OPERATIVES ARE AVAILABLE, THEY REPORTEDLY ARE NOT HIGHLY EFFECTIVE BECAUSE THEY RELY TOO HEAVILY ON MONEY AS AN INDUCEMENT.

¶6. FOR SOME YEARS LIBYA HAS MAINTAINED AN AGRICULTURAL PROJECT AT SAQ AL NA'AM NEAR EL FASHER IN DARFUR WITH 10 TO 15 LIBYAN STAFF. THE PROJECT IS OVERTLY ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING SEED TESTING, BUT IT IS REPORTEDLY STAFFED BY LIBYAN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVES COMMANDED BY A COLONEL WITH A DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS LINK TO TRIPOLI. THE PROJECT REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN USED TO FUNNEL AID TO CHADIAN REBELS IN DARFUR, ALTHOUGH NO LIBYAN REGULAR ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN DARFUR SINCE 1986. PROVISIONS FOR INCREASED AGRICULTURAL TRADE BETWEEN SUDAN AND LIBYA IN RECENT AGREEMENTS SUGGEST THAT SUCH PROJECTS MAY BECOME MORE COMMON.

¶7. FEW LIBYAN MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE EVIDENT IN THE KHARTOUM AREA. REPORTS SUGGEST SOME LIBYAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF DARFUR, WHERE LIBYA REPORTEDLY SUPPORTS CHADIAN REBELS UNDER IDRIS DEBY.

LIBYA ALSO MAINTAINS OFFICIAL CONTACT WITH THE SUDANESE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. IN ADDITION TO ITS ROLE AS SUDAN'S PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER OF OIL (AN INCREASING PROPORTION OF WHICH GOES TO THE SUDANESE MILITARY), LIBYA HAS FOR SOME YEARS BEEN ONE OF SUDAN'S MOST IMPORTANT ARMS SUPPLIERS. UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT OF SADIQ AL MAHDI, THE TWO COUNTRIES ESTABLISHED A MILITARY PROTOCOL UNDER WHICH LIBYA PROVIDED SUDAN WITH MIG-23 AIRCRAFT, BOMBS, AMMUNITION, OTHER EQUIPMENT, AND TRAINING. LIBYAN PILOTS ALSO FLEW AIRSTRIKES AGAINST THE SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (SPLA), A PRACTICE NOW REPORTEDLY DISCONTINUED.

¶18. IN EARLY 1989, SOME 20 IL-76 TRANSPORT FLIGHTS BROUGHT MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM LIBYA TO SUDAN. TEN SUCH FLIGHTS (CARRYING AMMUNITION, ROCKETS FOR USE ON JEEP-TYPE VEHICLES, AND BOMBS) REPORTEDLY ARRIVED IN KHARTOUM BETWEEN NOVEMBER 28 AND DECEMBER 5, 1989. THESE FLIGHTS CONTINUE AT THE RATE OF TWO A WEEK. SIX LIBYAN TECHNICIANS REPORTEDLY ARE STATIONED AT THE WADI SIEDNA AIRBASE TO MAINTAIN THE MIG-23'S, AND LIBYA REPORT (#) A FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM OF UNITY WITH LIBYA. THE AGREEMENT CALLS FOR UNIFICATION IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, AND SECURITY SPHERES. IT ALSO ALLOWS SUDANESE AND LIBYAN NATIONALS TO TRAVEL WITHOUT VISAS BETWEN SUDAN AND LIBYA, WHICH HAS PRODUCED AN UNDETERMINABLE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LIBYANS IN SUDAN. THE SUDAN SECURITY SERVICE HAS ALSO VOICED COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS OVER "UNDOCUMENTED LIBYANS" IN THE KHARTOUM AREA.

¶10. AS A RESULT OF THE AGREEMENT, THE GOS HELD A CONVENTION MARCH 24-26 OF SOME 1,600 PEOPLE, MOSTLY SUDANESE INVOLVED IN PREVIOUS GOS CONFERENCES, TO PROVIDE A SHOW OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE INTEGRATION PROJECT. QADHAFI WAS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS THE CLOSING RALLY OF THE CONFERENCE, BUT, DESPITE SEVERAL PRESS REPORTS TO CONTRARY, DID NOT ARRIVE IN KHARTOUM. LIBYAN DEFENCE MINISTER ABU BAKR YUNIS ADDRESSED THE RALLY ALONG WITH SUDAN'S HEAD OF STATE, GENERAL OMAR AL-BASHIR. ACCORDING TO MISSION FSN WHO ATTENDED, 50,000 TO 70,000 SUDANESE PARTICPATED IN THE HOUR-LONG RALLY WHICH REPEATED WELL WORN EXHORTATIONS TO AND PRAISE FOR ARAB UNITY, THE CORNERSTONE OF WHICH IS NOW THE INTEGRATION OF SUDAN AND LIBYA. (SEPTEL ON THE RALLY FOLLOWS).

¶11. AS A RESULT OF THE INTEGRATION AGREEMENT AND THE CONFERENCE THERE IS A MUCH GREATER AND MORE OBVIOUS LIBYAN PRESENCE IN KHARTOUM. THE SITUATION, HOWEVER, IS TOO MUCH IN FLUX AT THE MOMENT TO PERMIT A CLEAR ASSESSMENT OF THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE UNITY AGREEMENT. MOST OBSERVERS, INCLUDING SEVERAL ARAB AMBASSADORS AND THE CHADIAN AMBASSADOR, DO NOT EXPECT MUCH MORE THAN RHETORIC. IN THE SHORT TERM, HOWEVER, THE LIBYANS ARE HERE IN STRENGTH, MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN OF THE MILITARY AND OTHER MORE MODERATE SECTORS OF SOCIETY.

¶12. REPORTS OF SUDANESE MILITARY DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE LIBYAN UNION HAVE CIRCULATED FROM THE BEGINNING OF THIS RELATIONSHIP. THE ARREST OF SOME TWENTY RETIRED AND ACTIVE DUTY OFFICERS MARCH 25 (SEPTEL) FOR COUP PLOTTING REPORTEDLY FOLLOWED THEIR AGREEMENT TO MOVE ON A SPECIFIC DATE, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF OPPOSITION TO LIBYAN INTEGRATION. HOW EFFECTIVE THE ARRESTS ULTIMATELY PROVE TO BE IN KEEPING THE SOLDIERS IN BARRACKS IS STILL NOT CLEAR. WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT SUDAN'S ARMED FORCES ARE UNHAPPY WITH THIS RELATIONSHIP. GENERAL OMAR, WITH A WAR IN THE SOUTH AND A DISENCHANTED MILITARY WILL BE AN INCREASINGLY WARY AND NERVOUS CHIEF OF STATE. HIS DEPENDENCE ON LIBYA WILL PROVIDE SMALL CONSOLATION.

CHEEK

NOTE: (#) OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.